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FOUR PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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There are latent possibilities of humanity that call for fuller development, as there are latent possibilities of the soil that call for more thorough cultivation. We are wasteful of both our natural and our human resources. More intelligence, better method, keener purpose will enable us to improve our common agriculture; more intelligence, better method, keener purpose will enable us to improve our common humanity.

One has but to look around to see that men and women, boys and girls, have unrealized capacities—many remain stunted physically, mentally, and morally because they have not room to grow, or because blighting conditions surround them, or because other persons overshadow them, or because their resources as fast as they develop them are gathered in by other hands to promote other welfare than their own. It is intensely pathetic that many people whose lives would have been larger, stronger, and happier through higher education must remain small, weak, and hungry, because higher education is inaccessible to them. Again, human welfare suffers a constant loss in that many persons who have the ability and impulse to promote the common good are restricted in their social service by limited opportunities and meager resources. It is one of the gross defects of our current civilization that it makes so much of material achievement and relatively so little of moral and spiritual achievement.

Religious education seeks to make good these and other deficiencies in our present living.

1. The first principle underlying religious education is, that *religion is the primary element in life*. It makes for the vital aspects of human well-being. There is no other element in life so important, because no other element equally conditions human welfare.

Religion stands for an ideal attainment of the whole personality, in itself and in its relations to others; or, in historic phrase, religion stands for the sanctification of body, mind, and spirit.

At its latest and best, religion includes all that morality includes, all that social righteousness, social justice, and social service include, all that "loving one's neighbor" can be reasonably interpreted to mean, all that self-sacrifice and altruism require, all that forgiveness signifies, all that helpfulness can effect. In some sense and measure religion has for long meant these things. If such a list of qualities and actions seems like an extension of the term "religion"—making it more inclusive, more concerned with the common life, more directed to the present good, then let it be said that our conception and application of religion must progress with the progress of the race, must develop as our understanding of life develops, must be fitted to the modern conditions and needs. Religion exists as an aid to living; it is truest when it is most helpful. The evidence of this is in the history of all religions during their vital stage, and especially in the history of the Christian religion. The moral content, purpose, and effect of religion are essential to it, gaining in importance as religion ascends. And those may prove to be right who hold that in time morality will dominate and determine religion, so that religions will be strong as their moral element is strong, weak and transient as their moral element proves its inadequacy to solve the practical problems of everyday life.

The recession of the creedal, ritual, and ecclesiastical features of religion, which is so notable a feature of the present time, is a natural and proper shifting of the point of view. The change of major interest in religion from future destiny to present welfare makes decidedly for the common good. One still hopes, trusts, and, so far as may be, labors for ultimate well-being—his own and others—in the world that is to come; but the remoteness of this end is recognized, while it is felt that the best guarantee of an eschatological salvation is the achievement here and now of a moral (i.e., spiritual) salvation which is both individual and social. It becomes increasingly clear that the best preparation for the eternal time is being and doing right in the present time. Being

and doing right *now* because it is right is an imperative obligation and has in itself adequate worth. We do not wish to lose—we must not, shall not lose—the values that the creedal, ritual, and ecclesiastical features of religion have had, and still largely have, for men. What we do wish is to transmute former values into present ones, and to find new values in religion. New light upon life is breaking forth from our modern experience and thought, in which we may be discoverers, or of which we may at the least be beneficiaries.

Can we not anew strengthen, adapt, and apply religion to the social conditions that oppress humanity? As things are now, success comes only to the fortunate few; the many are held down to ignorance, toil, poverty, and misery. Can we not in some way raise ourselves out of the moral blindness, weakness, and perversity that still afflict us? Can we not shake off the selfishness, materialism, dishonesty, unfairness, luxury, and waste that stifle our principles and defeat our ideals? How are we to improve the current habits, make men thoughtful and serious, establish high ideals in the nation and in the commonwealth? We answer: *by making religion vital and dominant*; namely, by bringing it about that all living—of all persons, all the time—shall be religious in purpose, character, and action. By preaching, teaching, and exemplifying a twentieth-century Christianity that has a clear vision of the way and goal of humanity, that knows the conditions of modern life, that supplies the needed inspiration, restraint, and guidance which a man needs and society needs to keep it straight and enable it to achieve. Particularly, by promoting the moral-religious development of boys and girls during the formative period of their education.

Two generations are upon the stage—the older and the younger, the passing generation and the oncoming generation. With which chiefly lies the future? Upon which will educational effort tell the more? For which should we mainly work? The older generation is retiring through the wings, its act in the drama of life approaching the end; but the younger generation is moving compactly, sturdily to the front, its act about to begin. Whether one counts himself with the oncoming or the passing generation,

the future—with its possibilities and promise—belongs to the young.

Education, therefore, is the main chance. To make our sons and daughters, our boys and girls, the kind of men and women that we should like to have been, to help them to achieve the ideals of living which we reach out for but cannot grasp, to equip them to establish righteousness, prosperity, peace, and happiness upon still better lines—this is what we want to do, this is the task of education.

There is no group, organization, or class of men or women who cannot devote themselves to this problem and contribute to its solution. It is the common task, and the particular ambition of all free, normal, intelligent, serious, and energetic persons. Self-preservation may be the immediate law of nature, race perpetuation and advance is the ultimate law of nature; nature regards the individual as subordinate and ancillary to the race. The greatest human instinct, the greatest human obligation, the greatest human happiness is to provide a succeeding generation, characterized by those qualities and supplied with those resources which will insure physical, mental, moral, and social progress for mankind.

2. A second principle underlying religious education is, that *all education is to be primarily moral-religious in aim*. This is to hold for every educational agency which present society provides and operates. We have many educational agencies: for greater distinctness and efficiency the educational function is distributed. From primitive times there have been two great educational institutions—for the child, the home; for the adolescent, the social order. The Mediterranean civilization, in the ancient period, had four educational institutions: the home, the social order, the school, and the church. The school had been added to promote especially the intellectual training, the church (i.e., the religious institutions of the period), to promote the moral-religious training.

In this modern period we have as a heritage these four major institutions—the home, the social order, the school, and the church. Nor have we been able to create others of equal importance. Our contribution to education thus far has been some improvement

of the inherited agencies, and the launching of a few additional minor agencies, the newspaper and magazine press, the public library, the educational and religious convention, and the like. We are seeking to clarify and advance the aim of education, we are largely increasing the material of education, we are further systematizing and standardizing the educational process, we are extending the area of education among the people as a whole, we are developing an "efficiency" type of education alongside of the "cultural" type, we are acquiring in the light of biological science a better knowledge of child characteristics and child growth, we are replacing some of the scholastic materials and methods that had become classical, we are enlarging the social spirit and point of view in education, we are establishing the ethical interest and aim as primary and dominant. This is the way ahead educationally, and real progress is being made. The professional educators are keen, wise, and active in promoting this fundamental improvement; even the general public takes part intelligently and appreciatively in modern educational advance.

The opportunity is immediate and urgent for a reconnection of religion with education. Today they are apart, whereas historically the relation between them has been close and strong. In the United States the public schools have been under religious influence; more than that, they have been intentionally, concretely, and to some extent formally religious. The colleges have been mostly of church foundation and under church control. The indebtedness of the American schools to the churches of America is not to be overlooked or minimized. But this older relationship is fading out. Education has become an independent science and profession. Presidents and professors are not drawn from the ministry as formerly, but from the ranks of professional educators; denominational colleges are freeing themselves from church control; state colleges and universities are multiplying in which disconnection from the church is strictly maintained; the public schools are excluding religious exercises and the Bible. The vast body of school officials and teachers far outnumber the ministers, lawyers, and doctors; and they as a body assume or declare their independence of the church, together with the kind of religion for which

they suppose the church stands. Are we to dispute the right and duty of education to think, choose, and act for itself, to make over the school according to its best judgment, to administer the school without interference? The historic influence, or even authority, of the church over the school was useful until the school as an institution should reach maturity and competence in self-administration. But this maturity and competence have now been reached. It is time, therefore, for the church not only to concede but heartily to accord and support the independence of education and the school. The two institutions ought to be on a basis of mutual understanding, appreciation, and co-operation. Each is an educational agency of the first class; neither should despise, ignore, or stand apart from the other.

Nevertheless, the school is in the self-assertive, non-relational attitude, not feeling that its independence and competency are yet sufficiently recognized by the church. One result of this antagonism is the present obscuration of the religious aim in education. When the school detached itself from the church, it tended to detach itself from religion as well, for it was assumed that religion and the church were identical. Moreover, the kind of religion which the church as a whole teaches and practices is regarded by many educators as antiquated in much of its doctrine and point of view, useless in much of its ritual, dogmatic in many of its claims, arrogant in some of its prerogatives. In order that religion may recover its true place and influence in education, we must discriminate between religion as an organization and religion as a life-factor, between religion that is traditional and religion that is dynamic, between the religion of the past and the religion of the present, between religion as a particular form of experience, doctrine, and practice and religion as a vital force finding new expression, creating new ideas, giving rise to new practices. Like any fundamental reality, religion is more than any of the descriptions, formulations, codifications, institutions, or uses of it. If the particular formulae, customs, and administrative features of religion prove at any time to be incorrect, inadequate, or useless, religion may be adjusted to the new facts and the new requirements. Whether this adjustment will take place, how rapidly,

and how successfully, depends upon that group of men—chiefly ministers—who preside over religion.

School trustees, superintendents, principals, and teachers are many of them members of Christian churches, and friends of religion—if we use the term “religion” in an elemental and progressive sense. If we religionists can make it appear that religion means essentially right character and conduct, that they are religious who aspire, love, and serve, that education is religious when it promotes righteousness, nobility, intelligence, reverence, kindness, justice, and helpfulness, we shall have cleared the way for a new recognition of religion in the schools. Educators will come to feel that the school and the church have a common work, are kindred agencies.

Some of the present advocates of religious education are reactionary in their point of view and purpose. They would like to see the public schools turned back into church schools, promulgating the traditional church ideas of organization, doctrine, and duty, employing the methods that have become threadbare, mechanical, inappropriate, and ineffective. They would educate our boys and girls in that ecclesiastical-theological fashion which the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches have used and generally still use. The point of view of such education is static and dualistic, its conception is creedal and churchly, its basis is the catechism and the prayer-book, its method is formal, inculcatory, and dogmatic. To memorize and profess certain doctrinal formulae; to believe in and perform certain religious rites; to adhere to, defend, and extend with sectarian zeal some particular branch of the Christian church; to assent and conform to certain conventional moral standards; to acquire and use those terms and phrases commonly known as religious and which differentiate the minister and the churchman from the common speech; to look upon life in that detached, mystical, and other-worldly way which shuts the church off from modern thought, feeling, and action—these seem to be the things which some would restore as religious education.

But the movement for religious education in America does not stand for this ancient and outlived conception of religious education. The leaders of the movement are modern-minded men,

in full accord with scientific thought, in full appreciation of the newer educational ideals and methods, in full sympathy with the effort to ethicize and socialize religion, in full co-operation with those who are striving by thought, teaching, and action to make Christianity into a twentieth-century religion expressive of present religious experience, world-view, and moral-social ideal, promotive of all that is truest and most helpful in our American life.

These leaders in religious education do not advocate the use of the catechism and the prayer-book in the public school, nor even in the Sunday school. They do not wish the boys and girls to be dogmatically taught the creeds of the church—partly because creeds are for adults and not for the young, partly because a fixed set of ideas forced upon one in early life interferes with spontaneity, individuality, and progress. They do not wish the American youth to be trained in a sectarian viewpoint and habit, to maintain and perpetuate the divisive organizations, tenets, and practices which separate the forces of good, whereas Christianity calls for unity, co-operation, brotherliness, and service. They do not wish the Bible to be taught or used in a sectarian way, in either home, school, or church, for it is a book of moral religious experience, inspiration, illumination, and guidance that belongs to the race, and is not by right the property or the textbook of any exclusive organization, institution, or sect.

3. Our third principle is, that *the materials of religious education are discriminately inclusive*. The great peoples of the ancient world had their several religions, and in connection with these religions they had their sacred books. These sacred books constituted the chief literature for the instruction of the people—particularly the young—in the standard moral-religious ideas and practices. The books arose at various times, by various persons, in various circumstances, under the impulse of religious expression and inculcation; they were used, appreciated, approved, and “canonized” as the people gradually discovered their practical and ideal worth. From generation to generation and century to century these sacred books, or Scriptures, were handed on for the enlightenment and inspiration of the people in the religion to which they were born. There are still extant the sacred books

of a number of the ancient religions, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Christianity, since it arose among the Jews, took over from Judaism its sacred books—the Old Testament, and supplemented them with its own series of books—the New Testament, the two groups together making up the Christian Bible. This literature remained the Bible of the Christian movement even when Christianity passed over to the non-Jewish peoples of the Mediterranean world. These subsequent non-Jewish Christians of the second and succeeding centuries produced religious writings, but their writings did not become canonized as a part of the Christian Bible—we know them as the “patristic literature.”

Christianity has continued until the present time to be the religion of the European nations, and thus the religion of the most advanced civilization. For this reason the Hebrew-Jewish and primitive-Christian sacred books constitute the Bible of these European peoples and their offshoots on other continents, including ourselves—Americans. We concur in the judgment of our predecessors that the Christian religion is the highest, truest, and most helpful of all the religions, and that the Bible is the best of all the sacred books.

We therefore continue, and will continue, to use the Bible as the chief literature of moral and religious education. Rightly interpreted and treated, it contains much of our best material for this purpose. It is a heritage from the past, the best gift of the Hebrew-Jewish people to humanity, the treasure-house of many of the world's choicest experiences, ideas, and aspirations, a classical literature of supreme worth, the best comfort to the earnest soul, the best guide to moral and religious living. When the Bible is understood according to the well-established principles of historical, literary, comparative, and psychological interpretation, and when its teaching is applied according to the well-established principles of pedagogy, ethics, and sociology, the difficulties of using the Bible, even in the public schools, will be largely removed.

The Bible comes to us out of the ancient world; it brings to us the religious experiences, visions, ideas, standards, and customs of that ancient time. We live in the modern world, approxi-

mately two thousand years after. Why set up an ancient age as normative for a modern one? Our world-view, our religious experience, our ways of doing things, cannot and should not be a repetition of theirs. We may learn from the Bible, we may be inspired by it, we may find principles and precepts of highest value in the Bible, it may be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path"—as it has been through centuries past and will be through centuries to come. But we are not enslaved to the Bible. The Bible exists for man, not man for the Bible. We are not tied down to a mere repetition of Hebrew-Jewish and primitive-Christian religious experience, thought, and practice. To be sure, no people of the past had so deep an insight into the moral-religious realities as the Hebrew-Jewish people, no people had so strong and lofty a moral-religious purpose, no people produced so helpful a moral-religious literature. Yet absoluteness, finality, sufficiency, did not attach to their experience, ideas, or practices, or to the description of these things which they have given us in the Bible. Men must go forward to a fuller knowledge, a further experience, a more applicable interpretation of life. I am not thinking now of the fundamental principles and realities for which the Bible stands, and to which it gives classic expression; but of those many features of the biblical thought, standards, and customs which reflect the limitations and peculiarities of the time from which they come. We do not wish to reproduce in the twentieth century these transient elements of the first and preceding centuries. *We must find a way to employ the Bible for moral and religious education that does not, either in intent or in effect, re-enact the ancient world.*

Hence the present serious effort on the part of many persons—ministers, Sunday-school teachers, and laymen generally—to acquire a *historical* understanding of the Bible. The long, firmly established *normative* interpretation and use of the Bible is passing. We now know that the Bible is not a mechanically revealed, final, perfect, universally applicable, and all-sufficient textbook of religion and morality. We know that the Bible contains within its own pages lower and higher types of religious experience, theological belief, moral standards, precepts, and practices. We

know that the static, dualistic, small world-view which underlay and determined the thought-forms of the ancient period out of which the Bible came is being superseded by the modern developmental, unitary, and large world-view which is the splendid gift to us of the nineteenth century. We know also that the biblical writings are *literature*, to be understood as literature according to the principles of literary criticism and interpretation. We know that these books were written primarily for moral and religious instruction, rather than for the exact narration of historical events; historical events are employed abundantly, but pragmatically; and the ascertainment of the precise facts concerning them is possible, if at all, only by means of a thoroughgoing historical-critical investigation. We know that the religious experience and ideas, the moral ideals and precepts, great and useful as they were for the Bible times, cannot be transferred *en bloc* to other times and peoples, but must undergo adaptation, modification, and supplementation when experience and knowledge advance, when conditions of life change, when human needs develop. We know that the moral standards and practices of the past progressed, as even a comparison of the Old Testament with the New Testament shows; that Christian morality since New Testament days has taken up into itself much from Graeco-Roman and Anglo-Saxon ideas and customs; that we have much to learn by a historical comparative study of morality in the race as a whole; and that our present life requires not a mere re-enactment of Hebrew-Jewish and primitive-Christian principles, precepts, and practices, but a fundamental, critical, and constructive analysis and determination of the ideals and means of human welfare.

It is therefore not enough for us to read how the Bible people felt, thought, and acted, and then to feel, think, and act so. To be sure, we might do worse; but it is also possible and obligatory to do better. The Bible principles of reverence, righteousness, love, and service are true and binding principles, and the first-century application of them is illumining and inspiring; but it was impossible in the first century to forecast their interpretation and application for the twentieth century. One cannot completely expound the Bible for today who knows the twentieth century but

not the centuries out of which the Bible came; neither can one competently expound the Bible for today who knows the ancient centuries but not our own. Every person therefore who undertakes to interpret the Bible—in the pulpit, the classroom, the home, or the press—is confronted with a twofold obligation: (1) to make himself acquainted with the finest moral and religious experience, the best thought, the highest ideals, the actual conditions and needs, and the choicest educational materials and methods of the present time; (2) to make himself acquainted historically with the events, persons, ideas, standards, customs, and literature contained in the Bible. We are in great need of teachers and ministers who will thus become competent to select discriminatingly the now useful portions of the Bible, to disclose its moral-religious meaning, and to point correctly its message for present-day living.

But the Bible, great and useful as it is, should limit neither the method nor the material of religious education. We are at present working out our modern educational theory and method upon the basis of the biological, psychological, sociological, ethical, and historical sciences. Scientific education will gather together from all literatures and all periods of history, from all moralities and all social endeavors, those materials which it counts of value, to use them in all ways which it counts helpful. Ancient literatures, and particularly the Bible, will contribute much. But educators are not proposing simply to take the Bible as it stands and make it the one all-sufficient textbook of moral and religious education. Even in the Sunday school this is not the best way to employ the Bible. A literature of education is arising. Its aim is to train boys and girls, young men and women, to know and to deal with the modern conditions, problems, needs, and opportunities; to put them into right relations with life as it is; to lead the way to a better social order; to inspire them to brotherliness; to stir their aspirations and their zeal. The moral and religious principles which underlie this education are many of them those which the Bible proclaims and enforces—reverence, honesty, uprightness, truthfulness, brotherliness, sympathy, forgiveness, helpfulness. To these are added others which have been more emphasized elsewhere than in the Bible, as self-respect, self-reliance, self-

realization, knowledge, courage, foresight, chivalry, thrift, industry, efficiency, achievement, citizenship, human rights, social relationships, and justice.

This new educational literature, whose material is widely gathered but chiefly from modern sources, is capable of making—indeed, is certain to make—a new epoch in moral and religious education. The volumes, from many authors and presses, come so fast that one can scarcely keep track of them. The regular publishers of school books issue dozens of them every year. Even some Sunday-school publishers are now getting out textbooks along this line. In fact there are now enough of these modern Sunday-school lesson courses to permit of an educational curriculum. The aim of these textbooks is to teach the child what life is and how to live it. The stories, parables, sermons, exhortations, truths, principles, and precepts of the Bible are woven into the scheme of instruction and training, along with much else that is educationally useful, to awaken the moral and religious sense, to inform the mind, to develop the judgment, to strengthen right impulse, to direct the purpose, to arouse and enlighten the social consciousness, to stimulate the altruistic feelings and actions, and in other ways to prepare the boy and girl for young manhood and womanhood in this wonderful age of the world.

4. The fourth principle underlying religious education, and the last here to be mentioned, is, that *the need of the child determines what is educationally to be done for him*. Man is biologically a developmental being. He grows, and his growth extends over some twenty to twenty-five years from infancy to maturity. His needs are determined in every instance by the stage of growth in which he is engaged. This is obvious enough for the visible self—the body. It is equally true for the invisible self—the soul, or personality. The moral-religious nature of the child is quite as much subject to the laws of growth as his physical nature. From infancy to childhood, and on through adolescence with its early, middle, and late periods, the boy and girl pass through a succession of various and vital stages toward the achievement of manhood and womanhood. The psychology of this development is becoming known to us, so that we can understand something of

the attainments, capacities, and needs of the boy and girl at three, six, ten, thirteen, sixteen, and twenty years of age. We no longer expect the child to feel, think, act, or speak as an adult. He hasn't it in him to do so, and we will not try to make him.

The moral impulse, the moral wisdom, the moral judgment, the moral purpose of the adult are not the child's, and cannot be. The child and youth are morally immature. We cannot expect them to recognize, feel, or conform to the moral standards and requirements of grown people. Self-control, industry, truthfulness, altruism have to be acquired by the long and strenuous process of experience. The normal child, reared under favorable conditions, will develop in due time the character and efficiency which civilization now demands. But patience and faith are necessary while the process is going on. We parents and teachers learn wisdom in this matter. It is not our part to produce the moral growth of the child—that is the Creator's work; but it is our part to assist this growth, by giving the child the best possible environment, by living before him a helpful example, by helping him to his feet again when he stumbles, by comforting and reassuring him in the hard places of his experience, by giving him knowledge of things he needs to know, by showing him the better road to travel, by bringing him into association with schoolmates, playfellows, and friends whose companionship will develop the most and the best that is in him. If it seems a long time to wait for the maturity of a boy or girl, two things may be considered: first, that maturity is worth waiting for, since manhood and womanhood are supreme, ultimate achievements in our universe—worth all they cost, and that is saying much; second, that youth is full of strength, beauty, possibility, and promise—he who does not enjoy youth, in himself and in others, is missing one of the greatest human joys.

The child's religious impulse, experience, and ideas are also of a simple and elemental sort. Grown people are apt to assume or expect too much of the child in the matter of religion; especially is this the case with parents and teachers who have a supernormal amount of religious sentiment and zeal. Prayer, Bible-reading, church-going, Sunday observance are virtues into which the well-bred child will gradually grow; but the value of these things is

not self-evident to the child, nor can this at once be made plain to him by explanation. The earlier stages of their acquisition are to be effected by examples and habit rather than by inculcation; the child will begin by doing these things because others around him do them—he will accept them as his social heritage and obligation. Moreover, if parents or teachers force the development of the habit too rapidly or strenuously, reaction and animadversion on the part of the child are likely to result. Similarly, reverence, adoration, consciousness of sin, penitence, conversion, self-devotion, self-sacrifice, and other vital features of religion will in due time appear in the spiritual life of the normal boy and girl. But these belong to the adolescent periods of growth; they need not be looked for, and they should not be cultivated, in the childhood years. As for theology and ecclesiology, these belong to the adult stage of religion. Some young people may incline to them, because of particular mental bent or environing interest; but adolescents generally are not far enough along mentally, socially, or ethically to have a taste for or comprehension of doctrines and institutions.

Further, moral and religious education is to be conducted, not so much by formal instruction, inculcation, and exhortation as by environment, example, the arranging of opportunity and circumstance. There is some danger at the present time, when so much emphasis and energy are directed to religious education, that this good thing will in some instances be overdone, and particularly that very earnest parents and teachers will make too much of formal instruction and exhortation. Boys and girls grow essentially like plants, which sometimes need bending or pruning but ordinarily do best when they are little handled and given their natural freedom, to work out their own inner natures with the aid of the soil, rain, and sunshine. It is easier to teach than to train, easier to instruct than to nurture, easier to force one's personality upon another than to develop that other's personality. We can increase the quantity of moral and religious education more readily than we can improve the quality. Yet it is the quality that counts. There are indeed many children in the less-favored social groups who need more help than they now get toward the growth of

their moral-religious nature; they are poverty-stricken spiritually as well as physically. But the children of intelligent, educated parents, who are supplied with the modern educational resources, need better rather than more training. And better training may in some instances mean even a less amount. The child does not need and cannot well stand a persistent besieging with moral-religious instruction, advice, warning, and exhortation. All this may be given with the best of intentions, but in disregard of the psychology and pedagogy of child-life.

If the home conditions are right, the child will quite surely come to have right impulses, right habits, and right ideas. An anxious and strenuous surveillance and prodding are not required from parents, teachers, neighbors, or friends. Much may be said for the training of parents as well as for the training of children. Imitation is a primary law of growth. Example is more fundamental and certain in its effect than precept. The best help that parents can give their children toward their moral-religious development is to live before them every day the kind of life that is ideal. The children will learn to be kind, thoughtful, considerate, honest, reverent, helpful, obedient, industrious, and altruistic, less because these qualities are inculcated by word of mouth, more because those closest about them possess and exhibit these qualities.

It seems to be sometimes assumed that people are bad because they want to be bad, that children do wrong for the love of it, that human nature is "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." The facts of experience indicate, on the contrary, that human nature is aspiring; it has high ideals and it strives to realize them. The normal person, even the normal child, aspires, purposes, and strives to be good and to do good. Individuals who do not manifest this upward tendency in thought and conduct are to be classified as subnormal or abnormal, are to be looked upon as lacking in some essential element of human personality. There are, of course, in any given generation many subnormal or abnormal individuals, whose misfortune it may have been to be born with perverse or flabby wills, with degraded tastes and impulses, with moral blindness and incompetency. These individuals are the imperfect offshoots of

the race. But human nature is not to be judged or characterized from them.

Is it not in accordance with the facts of experience to say that normal human nature chooses perfection as its goal and looks forward to perfection as its destiny? The present inability to attain perfection is due to conditions over which the present generation has but limited control. We are members of a race and the race characteristics inhere in us. Although this human race aspires to and strives for perfection, it has so far been imperfect. Each individual is involved in this race-imperfection. We are a complex product of the generations that have preceded us. Our impulses, motives, abilities, peculiarities are inherited from our ancestors. We are not *de novo* creations, having ideal characteristics to start with; nor can we at one leap break away from our hereditary entanglements to reach the goal and destiny of perfection. The individual may ascend, but only with the race. We are inextricably bound together with those who have gone before and those who are to follow after. Why then expect that our boys and girls, of whom we imperfect people are the parents, will be perfect? It is not only wisdom but justice to the children when patience and appreciation are shown them rather than criticism and denunciation. Are we too ready to attribute to the child a bad will, bad impulses, bad nature? Do we take too little account of all the child has to contend with, of how difficult it is for him to achieve goodness? We understand and sympathize with him as he gradually acquires control over his physical self. Do we show equal understanding and sympathy with him as he gradually acquires control over his moral self? It is generally safe to assume that the child means well, even if he fails to act so. His fundamental desire and tendency will be toward love, right, and helpfulness. Even grown people wish to be judged and estimated by their inner choice and purpose rather than by their words and deeds. How much more will this be true of the young, who have not yet gone through long years of educative experience and struggle for self-mastery.

The needs of the child during the period of his immaturity are to indicate the way in which others can help him. Along with the

patience and appreciation to which he is entitled from all, there are many things that can be done for him by parents, teachers, and friends. Within limits there is value in teaching the boy and girl the general truths and principles of life, in storing his mind with poetry and proverbs that furnish a kind of general aid to right thinking and right living, and in enjoining him "to be good," "to do right," "to tell the truth," "to act justly," and the like. The choice, purpose, and impulse of the normal child will be in this direction, but it is helpful to confirm him in this attitude.

More helpful still will it be if we can show him how to interpret goodness, right, truth, and justice for the specific life-situations which he must negotiate. A clear and adequate idea of what it means to be good, right, true, and just is not easily or quickly attained. Life is so various, so complex, so difficult. Experience is the teacher of the meaning of these fundamental ethical terms, these fundamental virtues. Abstract definitions are not the chief way of instructing children regarding them, abstract exhortations are not the chief way of bringing them to realization in children. Really, ideals cannot be handed over to children; they must grow up by a biological process in the will and mind of the child. Through the long years of childhood and adolescence the boy's or girl's individual ideal takes shape, under the influences around him and in accordance with the impulses inside him.

The best that can be done for him, toward the development of his ideal, is to live before him and with him an ideal life in one's own character, conduct, and relationships.

The next best thing is to bring before him, in a multitude of concrete and attractive ways, the ideal living of other persons past and present. For this purpose story-telling is the main method. The Bible stories of Hebrew-Jewish and primitive-Christian heroes have for centuries been eminently helpful in giving clearness and power to these concrete instances of the higher virtues exemplified in actual lives. Jesus becomes the supreme hero of moral and religious living when presented in a way that appeals to the adolescent mind. Other nations and peoples had also their collections of stories, which are also highly useful. Provided, of course, that these stories deal in an ethically satisfactory

way with conditions, problems, and principles that find real parallel in the lives of present-day children and youth. Much use is also to be made of modern persons as exemplifying the fundamental virtues, for modern instances will be more likely to meet the child's need because he belongs to the modern time and must live in a modern environment. Specifically how he ought to feel, think, speak, and act in the life-situations which he daily meets is the precise problem which the boy or girl is all the time at work upon. Religious education seeks to understand and to assist him in this daily endeavor, for in it are the issues of manhood and womanhood.

The four principles of religious education here presented seem to me to be cardinal: (1) that religion is the primary element in life; (2) that all education is to be primarily moral-religious in aim; (3) that the materials of religious education are discriminat-ingly inclusive; (4) that the need of the child determines what is educationally to be done for him. Along these lines we are at present moving, in the home, in the school, and in the church.